February 4, 2005

Mr. Jeffery Archie
Senior Vice President, Nuclear Operations
South Carolina Electric & Gas Company
Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station
Post Office Box 88.
Jenkinsville, South Carolina 29065

SUBJECT: VIRGIL C. SUMMER NUCLEAR STATION - RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN 2003-02, "LEAKAGE FROM REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL LOWER HEAD PENETRATIONS AND REACTOR COOLANT PRESSURE BOUNDARY INTEGRITY" (TAC NO. MC0568)

Dear Mr. Archie:

On August 21, 2003, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued NRC Bulletin 2003-02, "Leakage from Reactor Pressure Vessel Lower Head Penetrations and Reactor Coolant Pressure Boundary Integrity," to the industry. This Bulletin informed addressees that current methods of inspecting the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) lower heads may need to be supplemented with bare-metal visual inspections in order to detect reactor coolant pressure boundary leakage and requested these addressees provide the NRC with information related to inspections that have been performed to verify the integrity of the RPV lower head penetrations.

The bulletin requested that addressees provide a description of the RPV lower head penetration inspection program that would be implemented at their respective plants during the next and subsequent refueling outages. This description was to include the extent of the inspection, the inspection methods to be used, the qualification standards for the inspection methods, the process used to resolve the source of findings of boric acid deposits or corrosion, the inspection documentation to be generated, and the basis for concluding that their plant satisfied applicable regulatory requirements related to the structural and leakage integrity of the RPV lower head penetrations.

By letter dated September 19, 2003, South Carolina Electric & Gas Company (SCE&G) provided its response to this request. SCE&G indicated it planned to perform a 360-degree bare-metal visual examination of each RPV lower head penetration during the fall 2003 refueling outage at Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station. In its same response, SCE&G indicated that the scope of subsequent inspections, beyond this initial bare-metal visual examination, will be dependent on industry guidance. The NRC staff notes that there are a number of ongoing industry and NRC staff activities related to developing criteria for the RPV lower head penetration inspections. The NRC staff expects that the criteria for these inspections will involve periodic bare-metal visual examinations or their equivalent.

The bulletin also requested that addressees provide a summary of the RPV lower head penetration inspection that was performed at their plants, the extent of the inspection and the methods used, a description of the as-found condition of the lower head, any findings of relevant indications of through-wall leakage, and a summary of the disposition of any findings of boric acid deposits and any corrective actions taken as a result of indications found.

By letter dated January 23, 2004, SCE&G provided a summary of its inspection results at Summer Station. SCE&G reported it had performed a 360-degree bare-metal visual examination of all RPV lower head penetrations with no evidence of penetration leakage or RPV lower head degradation observed.

Based on its review of SCE&G's responses, the NRC staff finds that SCE&G has met the reporting requirements of the bulletin for Summer. Accordingly, TAC No. MC0568 is closed for Summer Station.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Karen R. Cotton, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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By letter dated January 23, 2004, SCE&G provided a summary of its inspection results at Summer Station. SCE&G reported it had performed a 360-degree bare-metal visual examination of all RPV lower head penetrations with no evidence of penetration leakage or RPV lower head degradation observed.

Based on its review of SCE&G's responses, the NRC staff finds that SCE&G has met the reporting requirements of the bulletin for Summer. Accordingly, TAC No. MC0568 is closed for Summer Station.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Karen R. Cotton, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
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